

# THE VRC CONNECTION

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017

### 2017 Hurricane Season

By Dr Mandy Tolson, NCDA&CS  
NCVRC Coordinator

This hurricane season has already been quite active and caused a lot of devastation. We still have more than a month left in the season and we are very aware that many of our partners in other states will continue to have great needs in the weeks and months to come. Watching our friends in Texas recovering from Hurricane Harvey and our friends in Florida recovering from Hurricane Irma reminds us that any storm can cause great destruction and that we always need to be prepared. After Hurricane Matthew last year, we had amazing assistance from many of our non-governmental organization partners, state partners, and counties assisting other



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counties. This was an amazing effort that took so much work from so many people. As we go into the rest of the season, we know that many of these groups will be engaged in recovery elsewhere for awhile. So, in the event of a hurricane affecting our state, we will need to depend on in state assistance more than ever. I know that many of you have responded with your availability for in-state and out-of-state deployment in the past few weeks. Though we haven't received any requests for assistance from other states, or within the states, we ask that you continue to be aware of any impending weather. Thank you so much for all you do and your willingness to assist others. I will continue to use ServNC to contact members about potential deployments and check for availability. So, if you haven't updated your account recently, please do so. Please always prepare for your family and pets and stay safe!



**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE &  
CONSUMER SERVICES**

**Emergency Programs Division**

**Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture**

*Steve Troxler, Commissioner*

*John Howard, Director*



# Welcome John Howard

## NCDA&CS

### Director of Emergency Programs

Earlier this year NCDA&CS Emergency Programs gained John Howard as its new director. Our previous director, Sharron Stewart, has retired after many dedicated years of service. Though we miss Sharron, we have been given the wonderful opportunity to have John lead our team. We had the pleasure of working with John last year after Hurricane Matthew. John served as the Deputy Incident Commander with our team and was invaluable to us managing the event.

John began his career with the S.C. Forestry Commission in 1988 and worked as a Project Forester, Assistant District Forester and Area Forester. In 1999, John accepted a position with the N.C. Forest Service and held positions as a Service Forester, Assistant District Forester and District Forester. John has been involved in incident management during most of his career, serving mainly as Plans Section Chief and Incident Commander.

John has been involved in all-risk incidents including hurricanes Hugo, Fran, Floyd, Isabel, Frances, Ivan, Katrina, Rita, Irene and Matthew as well as response to the Columbia Space Shuttle recovery. John has also participated on IMT wildfire deployments in Wyoming, Montana, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Texas and North Carolina. He is currently the Incident Commander for the NCDA High Path Avian Influenza IMT as well as an alternate IC for one of the N.C. Forest Service Type 2 incident management teams. He is a graduate of the Natural Resource Leadership Institute and has served on the NCFS cadre for instructing the leadership trainings L-280, L-380 and L-480.

John has a B.S. degree in forestry from NC State University. He is a resident of Efland and has a wife and two daughters.

When you see John, please welcome him to our team!

VRC COORDINATOR	UPCOMING EVENTS:	REQUIREMENTS FOR VRC DEPLOYMENT
<b>Mandy Tolson, DVM</b> <b>Southeastern Region Emergency Programs Veterinarian</b> <b>(252) 813-0989</b> <b>Mandy.Tolson@ncagr.gov</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please see our website for future training and activities.</li><li>• Check out our sheltering webinars posted on the website!</li><li>• <a href="http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/sheltering/">www.ncagr.gov/oep/sheltering/</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ICS 100, 200, and 700</li><li>• Biosecurity/PPE Training</li><li>• Knowledge of NC Emergency Management</li><li>• Knowledge of Emergency Support Functions</li><li>• Attendance at VRC Meetings</li><li>• Sign a Code of Conduct</li></ul>
<b>COMPLETE YOUR VRC REGISTRATION AT</b> <b>WWW.SERVNC.ORG</b>		

# World Rabies Day 2017

Dr. Marilyn Haskell, NCDPH

World Rabies Day 2017 is the 11th anniversary of an annual public health observance started by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control in 2007. WRD is meant to raise awareness about the burden of rabies throughout the world. The World Health Organization estimates up to 60,000 human deaths occur each year due to canine variant rabies, the vast burden in Asia and Africa. Both the CDC and GARC work across the globe to prevent human deaths from rabies and relieve the burden of rabies in animal populations, especially dogs. On World Rabies Day, partners come together to strengthen rabies prevention and control efforts in many countries worldwide and in the United States.

Fortunately, canine variant rabies was eradicated in 2007 in the United States as a result of many years of intense dog rabies vaccination campaigns and animal control enforcement of the rabies laws and removal of stray animals from the environment. These efforts have resulted in a marked reduction in human rabies cases in the United States and North Carolina (since 1955). The last two human cases of rabies in North Carolina were in 2011 (eastern raccoon variant rabies) and 1955 (canine variant rabies). **Continued on page 6.**



## 2017 AgEOC Full-Scale Exercise

By Dr. Anna Allen, NCDA&CS

Each year, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Emergency Programs Division plans and facilitates the Agriculture Emergency Operations Center Activation. EP invites internal and external partners of NCDA&CS to participate as presenters and attendees. The AgEOC Activation is usually held near the beginning of hurricane season and the agenda features a variety of topics and speakers designed to increase awareness and understanding of hurricane preparedness and response activities in the food, agriculture and animal sectors. The program also reminds partners how the NCDA&CS Agriculture Incident Management Team functions during disasters and how partners are incorporated into a response. **Continued on page 4.**

**VRC MISSION:** Train and prepare professionals in the animal care community to respond to disaster

**NOTES:** To see recent news and updates, please visit the VRC website at [www.ncvrc.org](http://www.ncvrc.org). If you have questions about the VRC or would like to offer suggestions or articles for future newsletters, contact Mandy at [mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov](mailto:mandy.tolson@ncagr.gov).

# 2017 AgEOC Full-Scale Exercise

Continued from page 3.

After the catastrophic experience of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and the major response by the NCDA&CS Agriculture IMT, Emergency Programs staff concluded that the scope of the 2017 AgEOC Activation should be expanded to a full-scale exercise as opposed to a lecture-based design to test and refine some important capabilities.

A planning team designed the exercise to achieve the primary objectives identified by staff from a variety of NCDA&CS Divisions. Objectives included testing communications and information sharing, resource tracking and accountability, cross-training employees in IMT roles, and getting more NCDA&CS employees familiar with incident management and response processes. Exercise play was designed around initial activities that would normally happen immediately after a tornado event in a rural area with significant impacts to the food and agriculture sector.

The exercise was held at a North Carolina State University facility just south of campus. The IMT worked out of a two-story building on site while the different Operational Groups (Food and Drug, Poultry, Large Animal and Disposal) worked at various locations nearby on the same property. The exercise ran from 1-5 p.m. on Aug. 15 and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Aug. 16 to give the participants the experience of going through two simulated planning cycles, though the first day was condensed. Sixty-three people participated in the exercise, with 49 being players and the rest serving as controllers, observers and evaluators. There were 59 total injects for the participants to work through, and every inject was designed so that at least two people needed to see it.

The Food and Drug Group practiced response methods to damaged food facilities, power outages and food losses. The Poultry Group responded to injects about damaged poultry facilities and farmers in need of depopulation and disposal assistance for injured or dead birds. The group used this opportunity to test foam depopulation equipment. The Large Animal Group responded to injects of loose, injured and dead animals (cattle and deer) and damaged facilities and were prompted to deal with a potential disease event (a disaster within a disaster). The Disposal Group, including composting Subject Matter Experts, worked through the best disposal options for the scenarios that the Poultry and Large Animal Groups were facing, working on methods, calculations, and information sharing back to the IMT for resource requests. Each Operations Group worked amongst themselves on the scenario at hand, between groups when necessary, and practiced communicating back with the IMT.

The Command and General Staff of the IMT worked through two planning cycles complete with appropriate meetings and production of Situation Reports and Incident Action Plans. The staff responded to injects directed to them as well as participating in any injects coming from the field operations.

After each group was done, and at the end of Day 2, the Exercise Director facilitated a hot-wash to collect everyone's thoughts and feedback about the exercise. Most participants enjoyed the exercise and wished it had been two full days to have a more realistic experience. All in all, the 2017 AgEOC Full-Scale Exercise was a great success and a fantastic learning experience for everyone involved.



## Public Health Corner

### Canine Influenza

By Dr. Anna Allen, NCDA&CS

Canine influenza is a highly contagious viral disease affecting dogs. Currently, two strains have been identified in the United States, H3N8 and H3N2. The H3N8 strain has been around since 2004 – it species-jumped from horses to dogs. H3N2, an avian influenza virus, is a more recently identified strain in dogs; it was first identified by an outbreak in the Chicago area in 2015. H3N2 has caused outbreaks in cats as well.

The virus causes an acute respiratory illness in the majority of dogs exposed. The symptoms may be more mild or severe and may be indistinguishable from other respiratory illnesses. Laboratory tests are available to confirm the diagnosis. Treatment consists primarily of supportive care. The case fatality rate is low; most dogs recover in a few weeks with appropriate care.

Vaccines exist for both strains of canine influenza and are available individually or mixed together as a bivalent vaccine.

According to data compiled by Merck Animal Health, canine influenza has been confirmed in 46 states.

Listed below are some helpful links with more information about Canine Influenza.

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Canine-Influenza-Backgrounder.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/canineflu/index.htm>

<https://www.dogflu.com/>

### One Medicine Symposium

**Due to a significant loss of funding, there will not be a One Medicine Symposium this year.**

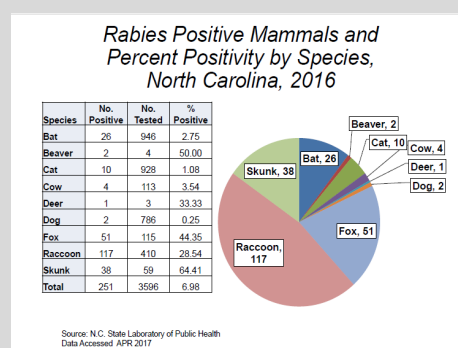
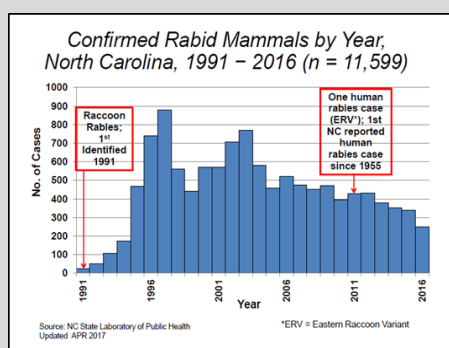
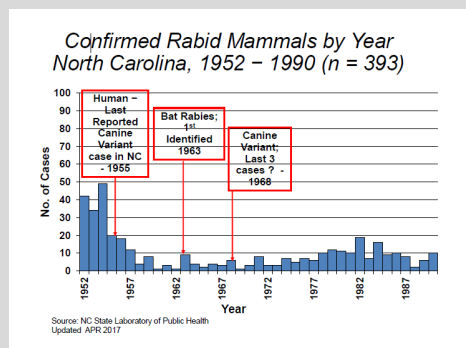


# World Rabies Day 2017

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**What does World Rabies Day mean to North Carolina?** North Carolina is currently endemic with terrestrial eastern raccoon variant rabies and bat variant rabies. In 2016, over 3,500 mammals were submitted to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health for rabies testing because of exposures to humans or domestic animals. The N.C. Division of Public Health's Communicable Disease Branch provides about 3,000 rabies consultations each year. The state lab reported 251 rabid animals in 2016; among the domestic positives were 10 cats, two dogs and four bovine. As of the end of August 2017, reported domestic positives included 11 cats, three dogs, one bovine and three equine. Cats are the most frequently diagnosed domestic species with rabies in the U.S. and N.C. There has been an average of 16 rabid cats per year over the last five years in N.C.

**What can partners in North Carolina do?** North Carolina General Statute 130A-185 requires that owners of dogs, cats and ferrets (4 months and older) keep their pets currently vaccinated against rabies. Rabies vaccination of animals is the single most effective course of action to prevent rabies in those animals. DPH encourages local health departments, animal control services and veterinarians across the state to partner to hold affordable rabies vaccination clinics for dogs, cats and ferrets, not only in recognition of World Rabies Day but throughout the year. Rabies vaccinations are expiring daily. DPH recommends that rabies vaccination clinics be held frequently and that vaccines are affordable so that every pet owner has access to and can afford a rabies vaccination for their pet.



## Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. World Rabies Day. <https://www.cdc.gov/worldrabiesday/index.html>.

Global Alliance for Rabies Control. <https://rabiesalliance.org/about>

World Health Organization. Rabies. Epidemiology and Burden of Disease. <http://www.who.int/rabies/epidemiology/en/>

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. Rabies Control and Prevention. <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/rabies/control.html>

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Veterinary Public Health Bulletin Board. <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/vph/bulletin.html>